

THE NOISELESS SPIDER

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no. 1

FEATURING WORKS by

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THE NOISELESS SPIDER

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Statement of Editorial Policy

The editorial board of *The Noiseless Spider* agrees with Henry Miller that the pangs of birth relate not to the body but to the spirit. It was demanded of us to know love, experience union and communion, and thus achieve liberation from the wheel of life and death. But we have chosen to remain this side of Paradise and to create through art the illusory substance of our dreams. In a profound sense we are forever delaying the act. We flirt with destiny and lull ourselves to sleep with myth. We die in the throes of our own tragic legends, like spiders caught in our own web.

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Letter from the Editor

The students of the English Club at the University of New Haven have worked hard this semester and we are pleased to be able to provide the school — it's students and faculty — with a magazine of literary talent. This issue of *The Noiseless Spider* contains poetry, an essay and four photographs. It is designed to give students a chance to experiment with and to learn and succeed in the world of creative writing.

I would like to thank all of the club members for their ideas and dedication to make those ideas work. I would also like to thank all of the students who contributed to *The Noiseless Spider*, for it is those contributions that made the magazine a reality.

The English Club has many innovative ideas for the coming semester. Movies shown in the Student Center Lounge and weekly movie reviews are just an example of what can happen when students come together for a common purpose and to share pleasure. *The Noiseless Spider* will only improve if you leave your thoughts in its pages.

Thank you,
Marie Ballester
Editor



— *Gabrielle Beatrice*

I Must Write
(Or Mid-point in HU 655)

'I' writing *all* about Me!
This has not been done before by Me.
Not for other I's.

To write on the static, rigid, unforgiving page
Is to stop a living thing in action!
What if it kills Me?
Will Me live again?

Will the I's reject Me?
And if those I's reject Me . . . ?
This Me has given all for I.
Then, Me, having nothing more to give, dies.

Henry Miller's I excludes emotions. Earthly sophisticated.
Joan Didion? Clinically scientific, numb and numbing.
Jean-Nicholas-Arthur Rimbaud. Illusive. Secretive.
Yet . . . Rich and satisfying.
So-o fattening for an I's nosey, fanciful mind.

Read them.
Each hides behind "Logos"
Leaking-out themselves in gobs and dribs.
Be brave I!

Nominative be objective.
I and Me work together and write.
Write something! I and Me will come through.
Be brave, some I's are Me's and know the fear.

— *Elizabeth Ferguson*

The Androgyny

Part I

Without patience
and within words without meaning
it stands close, angered the Androgyny.

xx, xy
a slight and singular declaration
in silent wars of gender

Everyone is she
Mark the spot y with a little bit of he
both sensitive and strong we are all the *Androgyny*.

Why the wars waged
all wars are civil
there has never been a lovers' argument,
merely self obscured by self.

—*Mark Cherry*

Autism

A face contorts
a world empties
a race evicted.

A boy sits wide-eyed
and away
seemingly outside all laws
save gravitation and germination.

Some say he knows not life or fire
others believe he has been stricken
with the awareness of a god and omniscience
is his damnation.

His face
sand on a windless day.

School starts tomorrow and for a millennium
or a day the subject will be his left hand.

—*Mark Cherry*



"Model T"

— Eric Schoonmaker

To Be Announced

Beyond this threshold
You shall find
The endearing sanction
Of twin spirits
Immersed in the vicissitudes
Of life . . .
And for those who enter, enter softly;
And for those who seek merriment, enjoy!
And for those who seek counsel, confide;
And for those who seek folly, beware!
For we shall not tolerate such
contemptuous airs!

— *Evan Pionzio*

Pivotal Stance

In times of peril
When life becomes narrow,
Think not of death and darkness,
Nor of pain and madness;
Yield thy weight
And hefty freight
And hence begin to deliberate.

— *Evan Pionzio*

Realignment

To you I must say
We have seen better days,
Yet our sun has not fled far away . . .
It awaits suspended over glowing with life
Never yielding to the gravity of strife.
Our love, internal;
Opponents, external;
And none, I foredoom,
Shall ever bludgeon and bury that bond.
For it bears the might of a million mountains,
A thousand thunders,
And a hundred Herculean heroes.

— *Evan Pionzio*

Rape of the Will

To a force we know
Yet never have seen,
In time we bow low
Or forever dream.

It lurks, alas, with horrid hardened hand
Forging vile vice from virgin virtue grand —
Far underfoot in a lecherous land
Where countless mortal morals doom's unfold;
Both young and old, those never hailed bold.

And thus it befalls so many a man
In quest of fruits, foul, from a fruitless land . . .
A land never conquered,
A land never still,
A land where none flee the rape of the will.

To a force we know
Yet never have seen,
In time we bow low
Or forever dream.

— *Evan Pionzio*



— Rosa de la Torre

I, When on the Beach

When I was on the beach
My father talked
for Real.

When I was on the beach
it was,
oh,
when I was so confused about living,
I felt like I'd never arrive

When I was on the beach
there were gulls floating
in the dreamy, listless, gray November
cloud of wind.

When I was on the beach
it seemed like
the summer talk
we all hear
too late in our lives.

When I was on the beach
Ah, yes,
I was happy.

—*Robert Kimball*

I Always Wonder

Again.
There it goes again.
I can't escape from it.
Hang up. Damn you.
Oh hang it up.
Where are my pillows?
I can fight back.
Hang it up.
Hang it — oh thank God.
But who could it be?
All the time.
Who is trying to call me?

I wonder.
I always wonder.
But I can't pick it up.
No, no, sorry sweetheart.
Not anymore, anyway.
Last time I picked it up,
There was someone on the other end.
He would not tell me
Who he was,
He just breathed.
But I knew then who he was.

I wonder.
I always wonder.
But I won't pick it up.
He can let it ring.
I'm nervous.
Like thunder in the quiet.
But I can't let him know that.
It would give him strength.
I know it would.
He lies.
He tells me
Only what he wants to.
So he can get
Whatever he wants.
Sorry, my sweetheart.
You've taught me that.
You only have yourself to blame.

I wonder.
I always wonder.
You were scared too.
Remember?
You're still scared.
Only this time of me.
You don't know how to handle me.
That's my strength.
You gave it to me.
So now I refuse.
I can't let it happen again.
I can't be weak.
There, I said it.
Hello!

— *Marie Ballester*

Reflections

Transparent and shining — reflecting all. At that instant a convulsion — crown of waves, restless bubble, and . . . afterwards only ripples. . . . But behind the curtain the gas melts into spheres — moving upwards, and his body falls. The greenish-blue was white — a vertiginous fall, only a fall. No more spheres — silence.

“Does it have any end?” He screamed in desperation. (But necessity flogs) and he rests his head — no more white. The bottom is near — stampede, but no death . . . afterwards it was clear. “Finally! It was all worth it,” he sighed. Novelty was all — it was necessary to learn.

“Don’t descend,” I warned.

“Why?” he retorted.

“No matter why. Don’t go down!”

“Just for a moment.”

Don’t go down, after all it would be sinful. “A statue of salt will be another.” He didn’t go down in vain.

“I need to, damn it, I need to!” He shouted. He is wise withal, but it will be of no use to him — invitation of the landscape. The future will be a succession of moments to enjoy.

Barefooted . . . and he stepped. Horror and disenchantment. Explosion. He heaves his head, and looks around — cruel awakening.

“Deprived you will dream, because there is no end.” But he won’t dream anymore. He won’t need ever again . . .

. . . During the fall, a last bubble. . . .

— *Hector Diaz*

Images of My Majestic Song

I'm singing to you in silent song —
 I whisper all of my emotions,
 love, fear, awareness, joy.
Awaken to my melodies, answer
 to my call.

I'm singing to you in silent song —
 I release all of my senses
 taste, hearing, sight, touch.
Challenge my words, answer
 to my call.

Make me known to you
 I wish to perceive myself
 in you,

Let my spirits rise.
 Be their King and hail
 with me.

— *Bernadette Thomas*

The echoing of rain
 whispers . . .
 in mellow chimes,
The softness of its touch
 warms . . .
 as easing thoughts.

— *Bernadette Thomas*

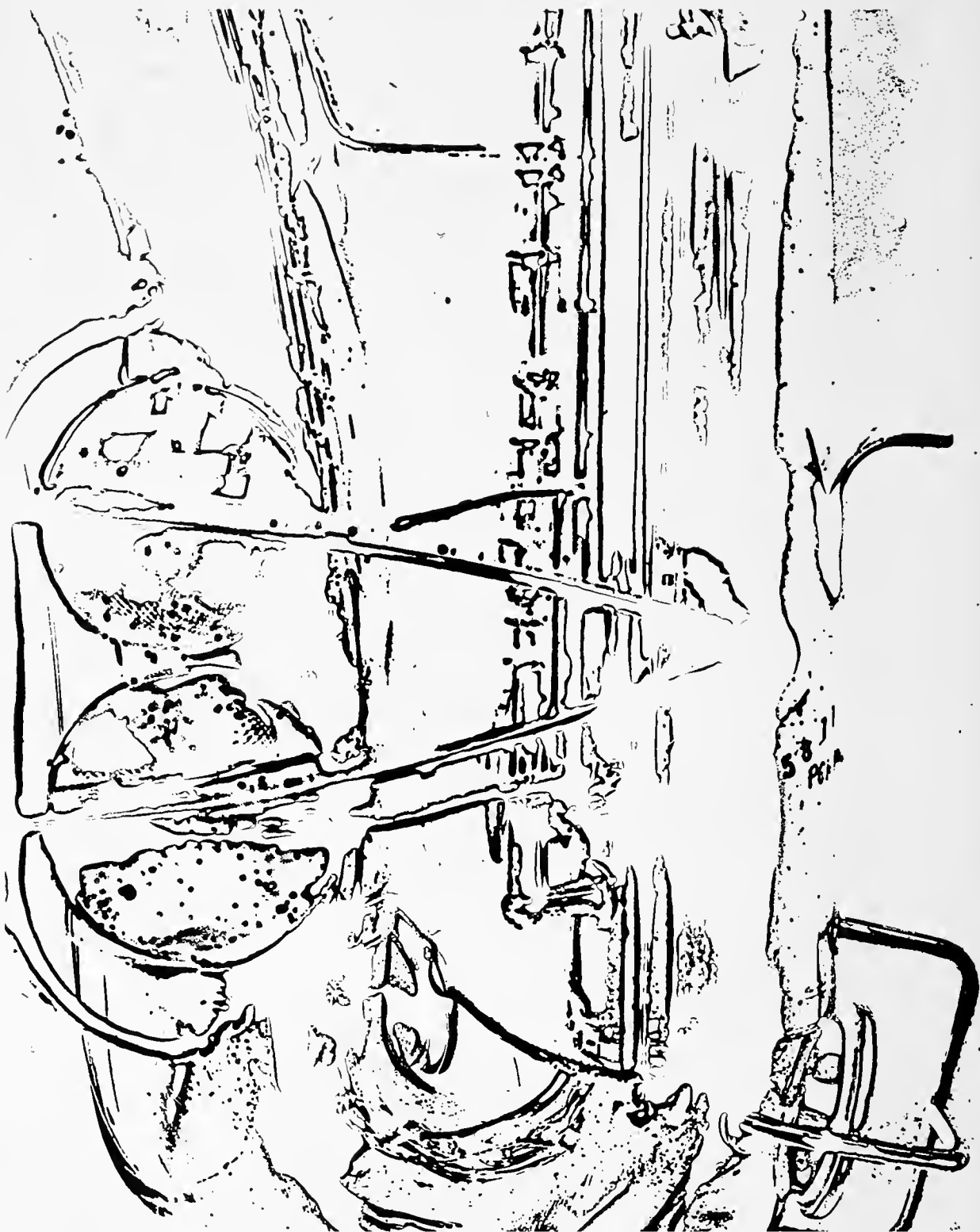
The purist kiss of water
 has runneth upon me
I swallow you not only in dream,
 but also in thirst

— *Bernadette Thomas*

Ignorance to Truth

I finally accepted that my love
 for you is a dream —
a falsified illusion I implanted
 in my heart.
Forgive me for being inconsiderate
 to your feelings — only to have
 my wishes fulfilled.
It is hard to admit to you my love
 is not love but passion only to
 have you be mine
Yet for me the pain rages to grave
 maximization because without you I
 feel alone.
To have your comforting presence —
 a need I beg for today
Forgetting about your dedication to
 yourself — only wanting for myself.
I never contemplated injustice to
 you — yet unconsciously dwelled on only
 you.
Once said that if you were happy —
“I am happy,” then why question? I
 only thought of myself and not you,
I’ve been foolish — Do accept my words —
I write them in truth — something I haven’t
 given to you or myself.

— *Bernadette Thomas*



"Ghost Image"

— Eric Schoonmaker

luminescence

luminous
moon
light
snowing outside
cool
white
skylight
glowing by my side
soft-eyed
night
light
feels good wrapped inside

— *Gabrielle Beatrice*

Dickens on Education in *Hard Times*

Charles Dickens' *Hard Times* in many ways represents a sharp criticism of the values and practices of Victorian society. An important aspect of this criticism is his condemnation of the educational system he sees emerging in England, a system based upon utilitarianism, materialism and individualism, the creeds which underpinned the laissez-faire capitalism of the era, and to which Dickens was strongly opposed. In *Hard Times*, Dickens uses the character of Thomas Gradgrind, a proponent of such training, and the pain which such an education has brought to those close to him, to illustrate the evil effects of an education of the intellect, exclusive of that of the heart.

Thomas Gradgrind is a man of "facts and calculations." His school, Stone Lodge, is founded upon the principle that the only useful knowledge is factual knowledge. He "trains" the children at Stone Lodge, which include his own, to be "replete with facts," "trained to mathematical exactness." He feels that the only worthwhile education consists of an education in facts and figures, training in mathematics, science and economics, those things which can be easily apprehended by the senses, and which can be measured, preferably in terms of dollars and cents. At Stone Lodge, the use of childish imagination is discouraged; the children are told that they are "never to fancy." They must not feel, but think. They must not wonder, but reason. Subjects such as literature, poetry and art are excluded from Gradgrind's curriculum because they tend to invoke the very imaginative, emotional responses which Gradgrind wishes to extinguish; such responses are not only seen as worthless, but as contributing to moral degeneration.

Thomas Gradgrind epitomizes the pragmatist. He carefully weighs ideas, values and knowledge in terms of its "usefulness" or lack thereof. That which is considered "useful" is that which leads to material comfort and the realization of material self-interests. He does not consider important either spiritual well-being or emotional fulfillment. Fantasies, fairy tales, ideals and aspirations, according to Gradgrind, lead only to non-productive, non-realistic illusions about life. Life is not a nursery rhyme, not a romantic novel, but a competitive open market; the only way to come out on top in the struggle for survival is to face "facts" and work toward the realization of one's own particular interests. As a "man of realities," Gradgrind prefers the practical to the ethical, the pragmatic to the philosophical.

Dickens illustrates his opposition to this utilitarian mode of education by having it lead to the downfall of Gradgrind's daughter, Louisa, and his son, Tom. The instilling of his utilitarian ideals has both stymied their imaginative capacities and left them emotionally barren. For example, one day while Louisa and Tom are sitting by the fire, Tom remarks to his sister that the sight of the roaring fire does nothing to stimulate his imagination: "Except that it is a fire, it looks to me as stupid and blank as everything." Indeed, Gradgrind's desire to destroy the imaginative, emotional part of a child's mind has more than been fulfilled with his son Tom. Aware of this lack in himself, Tom has grown up hating the world. He has also grown up with little or no morals. He uses his sister to gain the favor of his employer, Mr. Bounderby, while emotionally rejecting her and seemingly not caring that she is desperately unhappy. He lies; he squanders money. He steals from Mr. Bounderby, and in such a manner as to place blame on a poor, disenfranchised industrial worker. Having been denied the sensual pleasures of a full childhood, having been forbidden to let his fancy run free, Tom compensates for the way he has been brought up: all he now desires is to enjoy himself; and never having known real enjoyment, he can only go about seeking it through gambling and extravagance.


Unlike her brother, Louisa has retained a small spark of imagination and feeling, but it exists for the most part unrealized; she only possesses a deep sense that something is terribly wrong with her life, that an integral part of it is missing. All the emphasis on facts, figures, calculation, and "usefulness" has left her dead inside. She marries Mr. Bounderby, a man for whom she feels only contempt, because her father desires it and because she feels powerless to do otherwise. Out of confusion, desperation, rebellion, she turns to another man in an effort to discover that which has been missing in her life, that which was never talked about in her childhood — passion and romantic love. Afterwards, burdened with misery, Louisa explains to her father how her pragmatic, practical upbringing has ruined her: "Yet, father, if I had been stone blind; if I had groped my way by sense of touch, and had been free, while I knew the shapes and surfaces of things, to exercise my fancy somewhat, in regard to them; I should have been a million times wiser, happier, more loving, more contented, more innocent and human in all good respects, than I am with the eyes I have."

The only happy person in *Hard Times* is Sissy Jupe, a young girl not bound by the fetters of utilitarian thought. Sis-

sy's early life, that at Mr. Sleary's circus, was the antithesis of that of Louisa and Tom. At the circus, Sissy was encouraged, not discouraged, to pretend, to imagine, to wonder. The world of the circus was one of fancy, not "fact." Sissy Jupe's imagination was allowed free rein; her emotions were nurtured, not aborted. Within the environment of the circus true feeling and affection were shown; Sissy and her father had a loving relationship and were inseparable. Because of the qualities and sensibilities she developed when young, Sissy is more contented than any other member of the Gradgrind household, even though she has been abandoned by her father. All Mr. Gradgrind's rhetoric about self-interest, utility, and reality could not obliterate her imagination or curiosity, her kindness or compassion. Sissy, the "dreamer," the "failure," at Stone Lodge is the only character in the novel possessing psychological well-being and emotional security.

In *Hard Times*, Dickens argues against the utilitarian educational system of the Victorian era, a system which reduces the mind to a machine and the individual to an automaton. He shows us Thomas Gradgrind, the utilitarian, the pragmatist, and the pain and suffering which results from his narrow views. Dickens is telling the Thomas Gradgrinds of the world to wake before their views destroy them and before they destroy society itself. He shows us that life should not be seen in terms of narrow self-interest alone. Rather, the utilitarian needs to broaden his definition of self-interest, to include those things absolutely necessary for a contented human being: love, compassion, sympathy. If the heart's needs are ignored, Dickens warns, and only the intellectual needs addressed, our human soul will atrophy and die. Education must enrich, not debilitate, the human spirit. In *Hard Times* Dickens reminds us of the great importance attached to the way in which we decide to educate our children; he illustrates how the well-being of the individual rests on this decision.

—Annalynn Grillo

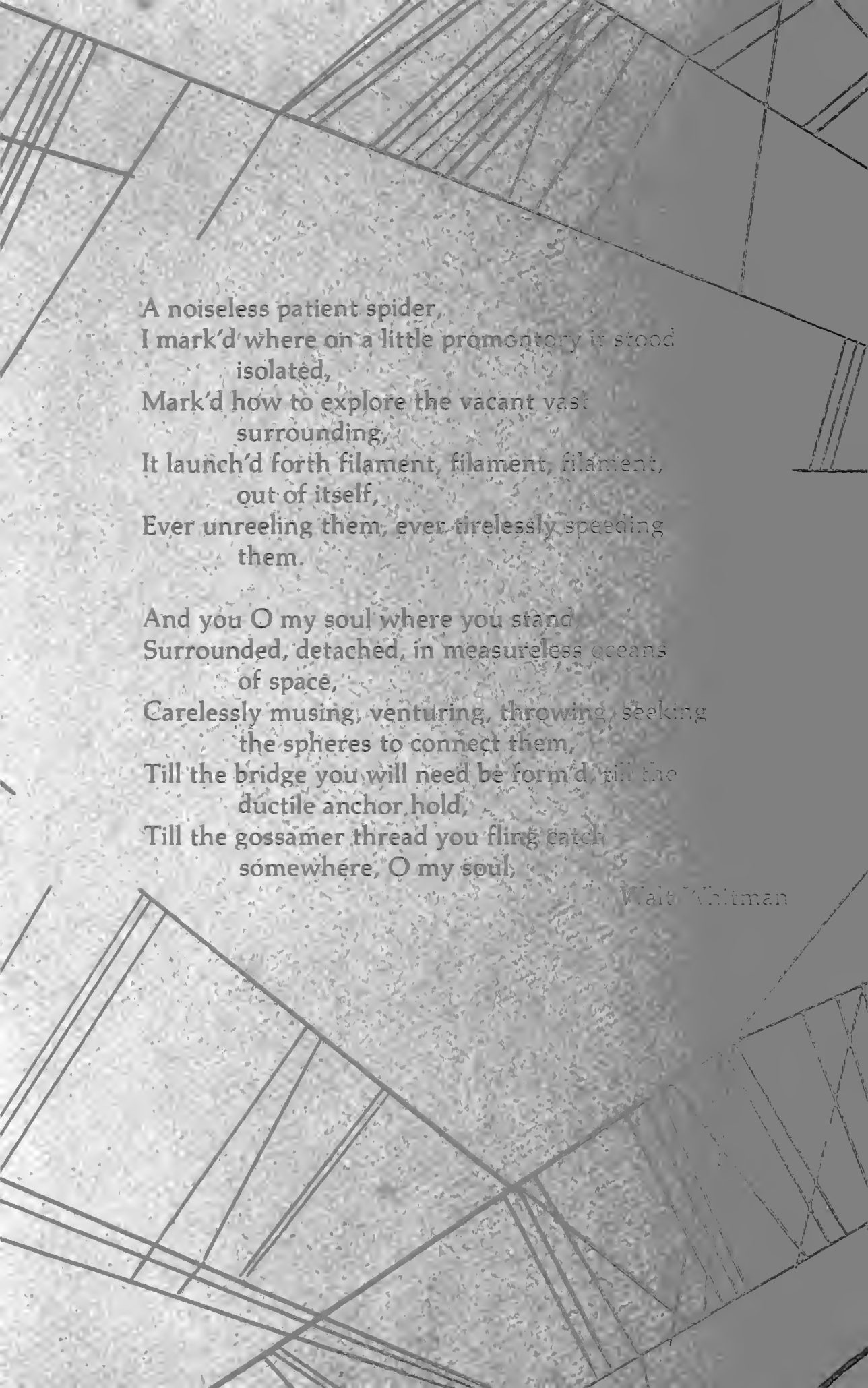


*"Like the spider, I return again
and again to the task, conscious
that the web I am spinning is
made of my own substance, that it
will never fail me, never run dry."*

— HENRY MILLER
in "Reflections on Writing"

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A noiseless patient spider,
I mark'd where on a little promontory it stood
isolated,
Mark'd how to explore the vacant vast
surrounding,
It launch'd forth filament, filament, filament,
out of itself,
Ever unreeling them, ever tirelessly speeding
them.

And you O my soul where you stand,
Surrounded, detached, in measureless oceans
of space,
Carelessly musing, venturing, throwing, seeking
the spheres to connect them,
Till the bridge you will need be form'd, till the
ductile anchor hold,
Till the gossamer thread you fling catch
somewhere, O my soul,

Walt Whitman